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## EDITORIAL

IT has always seemed unfortunate to me that so many people should feel that art was a sort of mystery, something that one must be at great pains to solve and understand. The average layman approaches the gallery in fear and trembling when he should go in joy and peace of mind. Many people seem to feel constrained in the presence of a picture, almost afraid to call their souls or their opinions their own, or really too much embarrassed to formulate an opinion. Others seem to have a critical chip on the shoulder as though ready to defy any mere artist to please or instruct them, their only joy in a picture apparently being that of discovering that one leg of a figure is shorter than the other, or the eyes do not match.

This is largely the fault, however, of critics who have sought to make a mystery out of their profession and of artists who are better at producing puzzles than pictures and who damn the public for failing to grasp what they have failed to express. Art is like air, food,

life and love, a thing one may enjoy thoroughly whether one understands it or not, a thing which it is more necessary to enjoy than to understand.

No art that one cannot enjoy can possibly fulfill its mission and for this reason one must approach art with an open mind ready and willing to be pleased, to meet the artist halfway, and enter into the spirit of the thing with him.

For art is, after all, the reflection of another's point of view, a presentation of certain things which have reacted upon the fancy of a fellow being in such a way that he felt constrained to record the impression that he might share it with others.

That is why a photograph is not a work of art, for the camera seeing everything minutely and indiscriminately and having no soul or mind to receive a thrill of joy from some particular aspect of what it has seen can, therefore, record only facts while art is a matter of pleasing fancies.

It is exactly in the exercise of its selective properties that art becomes valuable and interesting and most capable of fulfilling its best purposes. This is where various phases of art acquire their charm and distinction.

One picks out line and calls our attention to the beauty and delight that mere lines in themselves may possess and transmit; another the dignity and significance of mass, of textures, or color, atmosphere, luminosity or mystery. This is what gives to art its charm and its individuality. If every artist were to paint exactly what he sees and all that he sees exactly as he sees it art would become as dull as dish washing.

However, a true artist does not paint only what he sees but what he notices, and it is exactly here that one begins to approach the true purpose of art, outside of its great general purpose of giving enjoyment. It has been said that no two eye witnesses of any event will ever give exactly the same account thereof. This is because by the very make-up of our natures, each of us is prone to notice some things more than others, we instinctively lay stress on certain things which are or appear to be of most importance to us.

The artist, however, does not notice intuitively or unconsciously always or rather he does not always thus present what he notices. He may be naïve and he may be subtle in the emphasis he gives to the things which have pleased him, but if he is sincere and if we are sincere he will succeed in pleasing us and in teaching us.

A lady once asked me what to say when one looked at pictures. "Tell me," she implored, "how to talk about them intelligently." I answered, in a joking way, "Well, if you like them, say how charming, and if you do not like them, say, how interesting." Afterward, in turning over my own speech, it occurred to me that it contained much accidental wisdom. For what one likes must always charm one and what one does not like should always interest one, since it presents a problem of why do I not like this thing. To solve this is often not only to understand the picture but one's self better.

I used often to wonder why certain artists chose to paint such homely things. One pic-

ture of Mary Cassatt's, in particular, used to puzzle me. It seemed that she had not only chosen the homeliest of women and the homeliest of children engaged in the least interesting operations of the bath, washing the child's feet, but she had further clothed the mother in the homeliest of bathrobes and set the group in a room full of singularly homely and ungraceful furniture. I used to return to this picture, time and again, and wonder why it had ever been painted. Unconsciously its message worked its way into my mind. One day on a street car I beheld the loveliest woman I had ever seen with the loveliest of children. The mother was marceled and manicured, hatted and veiled and gloved to perfection. Her clothes bore the unmistakable mark of the very best and most expensive modistes; they were all new and fresh, and spick and span, and clean and elegant. The child was a wonder of golden curls and French hand-embroidery, ribbon bows and silk hose and little white kid shoes. I studied every detail of their dainty attire, I marked the perfection of their features, the beauty of every line and hue, and I thought how perfect, yet somehow I felt the most curious mingling of satiety and a sense of something lacking. Why did I feel that this woman did not love her child supremely? I looked again. Certainly she was a lovely woman—she loved the child, but one had to look twice to be impressed with that fact, the first and obvious impression of a love of fine clothing being so overpowering.

That evening after dinner I stepped suddenly into the kitchen to give some order to the little emigrant woman who acted as domestic. As I opened the door I caught a picture of a slim little shabby work-worn thing talking lovingly in German to a little bullet-headed Fritz, who stood at her knee looking up into her face with childish confidence. A queer thrill shot through me! All at once I noticed what I had often seen, unseeingly; what Mary Cassatt had noted when she painted the homely mother and child; what many a great master had noticed when he painted a holy group—mother-love unobscured by frills and finery.